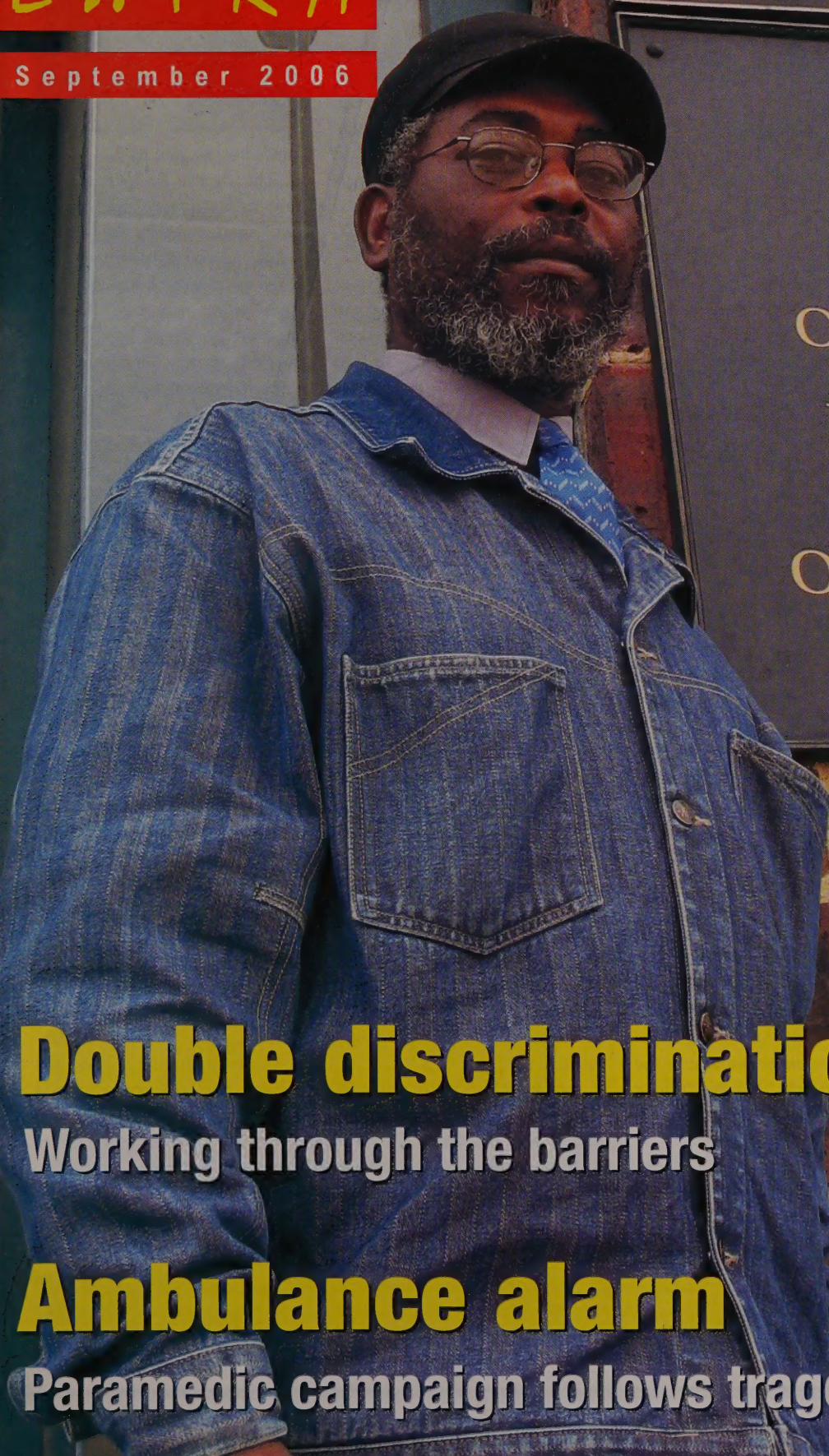


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DN EXTRA

September 2006



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Blind African
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Double discrimination

Working through the barriers

Ambulance alarm

Paramedic campaign follows tragedy

DN EXTRA...

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Death sparks paramedic storm

BY JOHN PRING

A teenager with epilepsy died after an ambulance arrived without a paramedic to give her the medication that might have saved her life.

The emergency medical technicians (EMT) on board were not qualified to give the injection to 15-year-old Kayleigh Macilwraith-Christie (*right*), from Holloway, north London, who had a seizure.

Her family and friends have started a petition* to persuade MPs to debate the issue of ambulances sent out without paramedics on board. They have already secured more than 4,000 names.

They claim it took the ambulance more than 30 minutes to arrive, and Kayleigh was not given the injection she needed until she reached hospital, at least 50 minutes after her first seizure, on 14 July.

Kayleigh's mum, Jean Murphy, told *DN*: "There are a lot of people out there who rely on the ambulance service – like I did."

"Everyone assumes there is (always) a paramedic on board an ambulance but there isn't. It's a lucky dip."

London Ambulance Service NHS Trust has launched an investigation, but a spokeswoman said it was standard practice to send ambulances



crewed solely by EMTs.

The charity Epilepsy Action said it was aware of "one or two" similar cases in the last two years, but couldn't comment on Kayleigh's case because there were "so many factors involved".

* For more details, email michelle_greaves1@msn.com

Asylum seeker wins reprieve

A disabled asylum seeker has secured a last-minute reprieve to temporarily remain in the UK, after the Home Office (HO) threatened to deport him.

Peter Gitau Gichura (*right*) won a temporary injunction to halt the latest attempt by immigration authorities to deport him and was let out of detention as *DN Extra* went to press. He is now awaiting the outcome of an application for a judicial review.

Mr Gichura has a legal case pending under the Disability Discrimination Act in relation to treatment he received at Harmondsworth Detention Centre during his detention in February (*DN*, April 2006).

His lawyers will argue at the judicial review that he will be denied the right to a fair legal hearing if he is deported.

Mr Gichura – who fled Kenya after he allegedly received death threats from Kenyan government officials – has had several



asylum applications rejected since his arrival in the UK in June 2001.

UK campaigners also say he is likely to die if he returns to Kenya because of the lack of appropriate medical care.

An HO spokeswoman said it did not comment on individual cases but would "take a robust approach to removing people from the country where they have no legal right to be here".

Charging forward

The government's transport advisers have urged it to put the needs of disabled drivers at the centre of any schemes to introduce road user charges.

The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) said its new guidance* will help policy makers develop more disabled friendly charging schemes.

DPTAC said charging was "likely to have a disproportionate effect on the lives of disabled people".

It recommended extensive consultation with disabled people and investment in accessible public transport, before introducing charging.

Neil Betteridge, chair of DPTAC, said: "Whether on public or private transport, disabled drivers and passengers could enjoy real benefits from the reduced congestion offered by road user charging."

He said Blue Badge holders should pay discounted rates.

*www.dptac.gov.uk/pn/060818.htm

On the cover: Henry Nicholson, of The Organisation of Blind Africans and Caribbeans, took part in research into job barriers faced by people with sensory impairments from black and minority ethnic communities. See feature, page nine. Photo by John Pring

Debenhams agrees to dismantle barriers

BY JOHN PRING

The retail giant Debenhams has signed an agreement with the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) to remove access barriers in 18 of its stores.

The formal agreement resulted from a court case brought against Debenhams by wheelchair user Greg Jackson, with the support of the DRC.

It is the first such agreement by a major retailer since the introduction of part three of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) two years ago.

Mr Jackson (*right*) sued Debenhams last year under the DDA because he was unable to browse in the menswear section of its Derby store, which could only be reached via a set of steps.

Now Debenhams has promised to install ramps and plat-

form lifts so that disabled shoppers can access all the mezzanine floors in its English stores by early October. The Derby store has already installed two platform lifts.

Mr Jackson said: "I'm very happy today because now I can visit my local store to buy clothes and receive the same service as other shoppers.

"That is all that I wanted and by using the DDA and with this agreement it is what all disabled people can expect in future."

Mr Jackson has now agreed to drop his county court action against Debenhams.

Bert Massie, chairman of the DRC, said the agreement "underlines the extent of the responsibilities for large retailers regarding what is reasonable under the requirements of the DDA".

He added: "This sends a



strong signal to all high street retailers that it's unacceptable to provide a second class service for disabled people. We are not

second class citizens."

Debenhams will also deliver a written report to the DRC on the access improvements.

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New guidance will make phoning easier

BY PRIYA KOTECHA

New guidance* will make it easier for disabled people to access the correct information when they use automated call centre helplines.

The call routing guidelines have been designed by the Employers Forum on Disability, BT and the Central Office of Information, along with a number of other groups.

The guidance, launched last month, highlights common problems faced by disabled callers, including long silences and repeated requests for information.

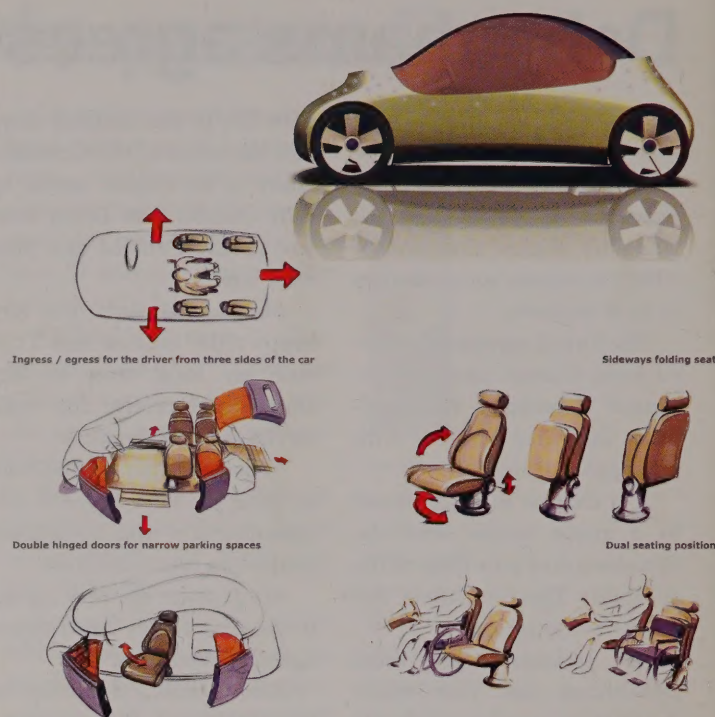
Instead, it recommends companies offer a specialist line for disabled customers when

the mainstream system is inaccessible.

It also says operators and call centre advisors should receive disability equality training and calls on organisations to provide access to an operator at the end of each set of automated options.

Fiona Miller, national manager of the age and disability action team at BT, said: "Encouraging organisations to give more thought to the design of their call routing systems will make it easier for customers to contact them and will be inclusive for everyone – not just people who have a disability."

*Barrier free call routing; for a copy, tel: 020 74033020 or visit: www.employers-forum.co.uk



Door to the future: An innovative design for a wheelchair-accessible vehicle has won student Uros Pavasovic the Mobility Choice award for independent mobility, at the annual inclusive design awards organised by the Royal College of Art's Helen Hamlyn Research Centre. The Fiat Scratch would allow access for a wheelchair-user on three sides of the car, with double-hinged doors to help access in narrow spaces.

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Fire risk scooters are recalled by company

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

Three mobility scooter models were urgently recalled last month after reports of them catching fire.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) warned* users of the Strider Maxi 3, Maxi 4 and Midi 4 Plus mobility scooters that there was a risk of them catching fire during use due to overloaded circuits.

The MHRA said it was aware of two incidents in the UK where a scooter had caught fire and warned of the potential for more incidents if manufacturers' updates were not carried out.

An MHRA spokeswoman said that only about a quarter of

the 2,588 owners of the three models in the UK had gone in for an upgrade so far.

The manufacturer – Days Healthcare UK – has told equipment dealers to inform customers “as a matter of urgency” to make arrangements for the changes, which would consist of a “simple wiring change” and inspection for signs of overheating in battery cables, plugs and sockets.

The company said: “We would like to apologise for any inconvenience that this action may cause to you and our customers and would stress that we feel it is essential to put customer safety first at all times.”

* For more information, tel: 020 7084 2000 or visit www.mhra.gov.uk

CHANNEL 4



Four for Four: Channel 4 has produced a new guide to help production companies increase the presence of disabled and ethnic minority people on screen. Channel 4's *Guide To Improving On-Screen Diversity** points to shows such as the documentary *Make Me Normal* (pictured), which have used inclusive casting. * For a copy, tel: 020 73068125 or visit www.channel4.com/corporate/4producers/commissioning/commissioning.html

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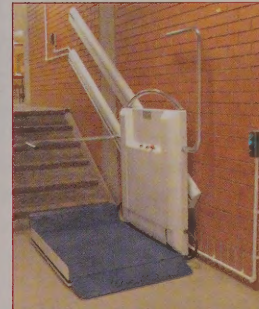
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DN HACKED OFF

JOHN STANTON

After months of anxious waiting, I finally discovered whether I would be given the chance to work as a sports reporter

I'm writing this column while sitting on a train on my way to deepest, darkest Essex, which – believe it or not – is something I consider a great success.

This trip is my second since getting my first job in journalism. I am working for my local paper, the *Aldershot News*, as a sports reporter – something I have been working towards for almost five years.

My interview went very well but the phone call took an agonisingly long time to come.

The doubts began to set in a little when I had a phone call

from the sports editor asking me the one question I knew I couldn't answer to his satisfaction: "John, we forgot to ask at your interview... Can you drive?"

I was assured my lack of a car (I'm short sighted and so cannot drive) wouldn't count against me, but the days of silence that followed began to raise nagging doubts.

The interview couldn't have gone any better, nor could I imagine another one ever going quite so well.

If I didn't get this job, maybe I'd never get one doing what I love.

Thankfully, it turned out the delay was caused by my new boss checking that I could do my job without a car and ensuring the company had the money to fund my rail-based jaunts around the south of England.

'John, we forgot to ask you at your interview... Can you drive?'

They decided they could and my reward (or is it punishment?) is that I am now travelling hundreds of miles following

the fortunes of a lowly football club with an inability to win a game.

But I am certainly not complaining. After months of anxiously wondering whether anyone would take the "risk" of employing a journalist without his own transport, I finally had the answer.

My employer's attitude was that I was the best person for the job so nothing else should get in the way of that.

I am incredibly grateful to them for giving me this chance. Other employers would do well to follow their example.

John Stanton writes in *DN Extra* every month as part of our Hacked Off campaign to get more disabled people into journalism and stamp out their misrepresentation in the media.

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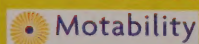
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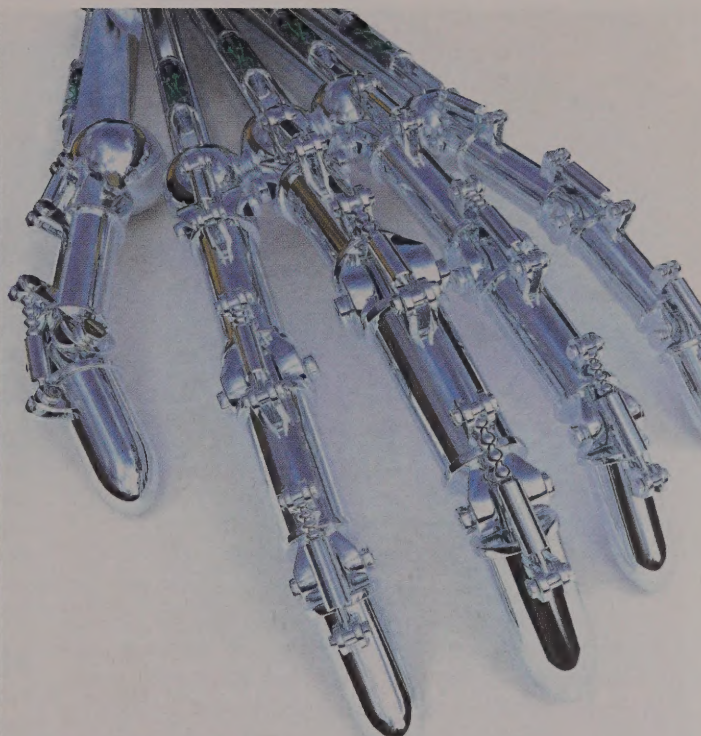


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Speaking out on double jeopardy

Henry Nicholson, development co-ordinator for the Organisation of Blind Africans and Caribbeans, represented the charity on research into the inclusion of people with sensory impairments from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups in the job market (*DN*, September). Here he writes about the research and his own personal experiences

When I experienced a sudden and severe loss of sight in 1992, it severely affected my ability not only to function on a daily basis, but also to seek and obtain employment.

The lack of assistance in terms of accessible information, the prohibitive costs of low vision aids and adaptations and the lack of access to appropriate mobility training, made the adjustment to the sight loss a long, hard and painful experience.

My experience of job hunting was equally bleak, with many applications not meriting a response, much less an interview, even though I had the skills and experience necessary for that particular job.

During our research, it became apparent that this transition period after someone has experienced sight loss is key. If work is done during this period to give that person the right support then they will be far better prepared to cope with their sight loss, not only in terms of independent living but in finding a job.

I needed assistance to access information, to read, to write and to navigate my environment. But I think I had one contact with my local social work department in three years. All they did was give me a leaflet that said that I was

now officially visually impaired and they could do X, Y and Z. But when I asked for X, Y and Z, I was told they weren't there because of a lack of resources.

That is still the case. There has not been any great increase in provision since that time.

Employment is the key to independence. To be truly independent, you need to have finance. You can't be independent on state benefits. You need to be working and earning and earning enough so you can live a relatively comfortable lifestyle.

Our experience of employers is that some of them would do more if they had access to all the relevant information. But there is still this perception that disabled people are going to function at a lesser level. There is also the perception that we are going to be sick more.

Many employers have these stereotypical attitudes and often claimed ignorance of the support available for disabled employees, such as Access To Work (ATW) and other means of offsetting the costs of employing a disabled person.

In contrast, when I applied for a post at OBAC in 1996, they helped me obtain the in-work support I needed, such as ATW and the necessary technology training.

When you are also from a



Henry Nicholson (top, in OBAC's training suite) and with OBAC director Ibukun Olashore

black and minority ethnic (BME) background then you are often confronted by the double jeopardy situation, where you face discrimination on the basis of both race and disability.

If employers have only been used to dealing with one set of individuals, they find it difficult to break out of that. Often they don't have enough knowledge about the needs and cultural background of BME people and the things they would find offensive.

When you come up against this kind of attitude, you tend to think a lot more negatively and not take action on your own behalf. It encourages dependency rather than independence.

The research project has proved very rewarding for both myself and the other OBAC members involved. It has provided an avenue to speak out

about our individual experiences and the barriers that we face in employment. We have been able to raise concerns about the attitudes of employers and their lack of knowledge about the assistance available to them in employing people with a disability.

There is no limit to what an individual can do once they are determined enough. Once they get the support necessary they will flourish.

Our report creates a framework for action, a working tool, so visually impaired BME people can lobby for change.

Having said this, although the study concentrated on people from a particular background, many of the experiences faced will be shared by visually impaired people from mainstream society. The need for change goes right across the board.

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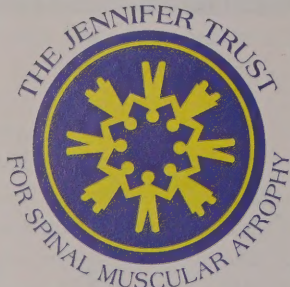
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Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) is a genetic neuromuscular condition. Many children with SMA die within one or two years of life. Others will have substantial disability but many people with milder types of SMA will lead independent and fulfilling lives, whilst still facing barriers arising from their condition. One in 40 of us carry the gene that causes SMA but there is no effective treatment and no cure – yet.



For an application pack or informal discussion about the role please contact Hayley Eggleton, Action Planning, Mid-Day Court, 30 Brighton Road, Sutton, Surrey, SM2 5BN. Telephone: 020 8642 4122, e-mail heggleton@actionplanning.co.uk

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APPOINTMENTS TO THE BRECON BEACONS, SNOWDONIA AND PEMBROKESHIRE COAST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITIES

Background

Wales' National Park Authorities are special purpose local authorities responsible for conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of these special areas and for promoting enjoyment and understanding of the Parks by the public. The Park Authorities are also under a duty to seek to foster the socio-economic well being of the Park communities in carrying out these responsibilities.

As well as being the local planning authority for their area, each Park Authority also plays a key role in supporting the Assembly's sustainable development and social inclusion objectives. It does this by working in partnership with other organisations, including local community groups, supporting community initiatives through, for example, the Sustainable Development Fund and increasing countryside access opportunities for all.

Appointments

The National Assembly for Wales is now looking to appoint three new members - one each to the Brecon Beacons, Snowdonia and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authorities. The term of appointment will commence in Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority on 1 February 2007 and in the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and Snowdonia National Park Authority the terms of appointments will commence on 1 April 2007.

The role of Members of a National Park Authority is to provide effective leadership for the individual Park Authority, to help develop their strategic plans for the future and to ensure that the Park Authority's main business is handled efficiently and effectively.

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To succeed in this role it is important that you understand the purposes for which the National Parks were designated and you must be able to bring a national perspective to the work of the Park Authority. Experience in areas of direct relevance to the needs of the Parks such as conservation of the natural, historic and cultural environment; planning; architecture; tourism; outdoor recreation; community activities; and farming and forestry would be an advantage. You should also be able to demonstrate an awareness of the interests of all those who live or work in, or who visit the Parks.

Able to commit a minimum of at least four days per month to Park Authority business (attendance at key meetings, etc), as a member of a Park Authority you will be expected to work constructively as part of a team to develop and take forward the Park Authority's strategic agenda. Members will receive an allowance, as well as reasonable expenses, from the Park Authority for their work as members, and may also be eligible to claim child care/care for the elderly allowance while carrying out work for the Park Authority. This is a non-pensionable post.

The ability to speak Welsh is desirable, but not essential.

It is the policy of the National Assembly for Wales to promote and integrate equality of opportunity into all aspects of its business including appointments to public bodies. It welcomes and encourages applications from groups currently under-represented including women, minority ethnic communities and people with a disability. The principles of fair and open competition will apply and appointments will be made on merit.

For an application pack and further details, please contact the Public Appointments Unit, Welsh Assembly Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NQ. Tel: 029 2082 3042 / 3068, Fax: 029 2082 6869 or E-mail: PublicAppointments@wales.gsi.gov.uk

The closing date for the receipt of completed applications is 22 September 2006. Application forms received after this date may not be considered. It is intended to carry out the interviews, which will be held in the relevant Park Authority, during the week of 27 November 2006.

**A large print version of this advert can be obtained
by request from 029 2082 3068.**

www.wales.gov.uk

WARNING – We have been warned about a scam involving people from overseas who say they want to buy a product and who offer to pay using cheques, Western Union money transfers and certified cheques. Although no DN readers to our knowledge have been hit by this, please be particularly wary of accepting cheques from overseas. For more information, visit the Metropolitan Police website.

**DEADLINE – Disability Now October 2006 published 23 September.
Classified deadlines: Booking: 8 September. Copy: 12 September.**

scope

employment service

Are you disabled?**Are you claiming incapacity benefit or job seeker allowance?****Do you want to secure a permanent job with a minimum 16 hours per week?**

If you have said yes to the three questions above then we can probably help you.

Scope's Employment Service is part of **SCOPE**, the national charity. As a provider of **WORKSTEP**, a government sponsored programme designed to assist disabled people in entering the workplace we can provide you with support in finding a suitable job; furthermore, that support will continue, should you require it, when you are employed. At no cost to you at any stage.

The employers we work with represent large corporations, public sector organisations and local businesses. There are currently a number of vacancies nationwide for a range of different jobs, in a number of different industries, for example:

- Customer advisors in DIY retail
- HO and store vacancies with a national charity
- Administrative posts in central government
- Retail jobs in a large supermarket chain
- Call centre jobs in financial services and telecommunications

Given the span of vacancies the employers we work with have, we are looking for a range of experiences and skills in the people registering on our job seeker database.

Interested? Please send your CV. You can:

- **Email:** employment.support@scope.org.uk
- **Write:** Scope s Employment Service, Suite 1A, Kings Hall, St Ives Business Park, Parsons Green, St Ives PE27 4WY
- **Call:** Kirsty Barton on 01480 309619

Once we have received your CV we will contact you if we need to check any information. We will then enter your details on our database, regularly check for suitable positions. Once we have identified a potential job, one of our Employment Officers will help you prepare for the interview, and provide you with the advice and support you may need.

We look forward to hearing from you.

For disabled people achieving equality

DN LINAGE

Tel: 020 7619 7320, Fax: 020 7619 7331, Minicom: 020 7619 7332, email: patrick.durhammatthews@scope.org.uk

Personal

FEMALE, 35, CEREBRAL Palsy, walks with crutches, reasonable education, wltm male 35/45 for friendship, possible relationship. Also female friends for socialising. Enjoy eating out, theatre and ten pin bowling. Bromley and Croydon area. Box no: 328

MALE, 51, WITH cerebral palsy, living in Hampshire, uses wheelchair and public transport to get about. Wltm female 45+ for friendship/long term relationship. Works voluntarily for disability organisations, watches tv and enjoys life. All replies answered. Box No: 329

SOLVENT SINGLE MALE. Very slight disability, early 40s seeks female sexual surrogate. All areas considered. Midlands, South Wales, West Country preferred. I'm fully mobile and can travel. Box No: 330

Cars/Vans/Caravans

VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 1.8, auto, pas, e/windows, CD player, air con. With hydraulic lift for scooter elevation through tailgate at rear. Five seater when 2 seats folded back to accommodate scooter or can carry seven when not. Y reg, full 12 months' MOT, 13k miles, only 2 owners from new and fsh. £5,495 ono. Shoprider Sovereign S88 8NR with basket and lights, max speed 8 mph with reverse function, £400 ono or £5,000 for both. Will deliver in the Midlands area. Tel: 01332 792465 (Derbs) or mobile: 07811 942891.

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Tel: 01747 812019
www.normandyfarmhouses.co.uk

FORD FOCUS ZETEC, 51 Reg, Automatic, 26,000 miles, Constable carchair conversion, 12 months MOT, CD player, Air con. Only 2 owners from new. Free local delivery can be delivered. £5,900 ono. Tel: 01986 872378 (Suffolk) email: katrina_buck@hotmail.com

CHAIRMAN RENAULT KANGOO 1.4, auto, Y reg 11k miles only two owners from new. Converted for wheelchair by Gowrings including lowering floor, ramp, tailgate, wheelchair belts and electric winch. Plus two passenger seats. Electric windows and side mirrors. MOT July 2007 6 months' Road Tax as petrol car. £8,000 ono. Tel: 020 8809 7442 (North London).

NISSAN PRAIRIE SLX 2.0, J reg, 127k miles, pas, e/windows, e/mirrors and e/sunroof. With Brotherwood wheelchair conversion incl rear ramp enabling wheelchair to fit in between 2 rear seats, infill seat when no wheelchair passenger. In excellent condition, 12 months' MOT, service history and 2 owners from new. £1,999 ono. Tel: 01384 571234 (W. Mids).

VOLKSWAGEN HI-TOP Campervan 1.9 Tdi, RICON lift, Leisure drive conversion (installed in 2003), T reg, 74k miles, manual, full MOT and 6 months tax, 4 berths, fridge, gas hob and grill, 240V connection, front seat swivels, CD player, portapotti, awning, in very good condition, £11,000 ono. Tel: 0116 286 5172 (Leicester) or 07712 132259.

VW TRANSPORTER (T Reg) Auto. Adapted for disabled driver. Automatic rear doors and ramp. Lowering suspension. Electronic tie down system for wheelchair. Electronic six-way driver seat. MOT May 2007. Excellent condition. £5,995 ono. Fsh and only 2 owners. Telephone 01382 800018 (Dundee) or email roselyncurran3@hotmail.com

VAUXHALL CORSA LS 1.4, L reg, rainbow blue, auto, pas. Adaptacar hand controls, wheelchair hoist with topbox which fits any standard wheelchair. In excellent condition inside and out, 26k miles, fsh and only 2 owners from new, full 12 months' MOT. £2,450 Tel: 01225 862629 (Wilts) or email: ann_m_7@hotmail.com



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BLUE CHRYSLER GRAND Voyager LX, auto, adapted by Steering Developments to enable wheelchair user to either drive or be carried as a passenger. 62k miles. Full service

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Cont'd see pg 14

SKODA 1.6K WITH Gleneagles conversion, registered August 2006, wheelchair ramp, seating for driver and 2 passengers. Excellent condition, 7k miles, MOT August 2007. Must be seen, £4,900. Tel: 0131 445 1885 (Edinburgh).

CHAIRMAN CITROEN BERLINGO 1.8, 80k miles, air con, pas, e/windows. T reg. With Gowrings wheelchair conversion incl electric ramp at rear, lowering suspension and inertia belts. Wheelchair fits in between 2 rear passenger seats therefore carries 5 including wheelchair. In very good condition, recently serviced. £5,995 ono. Tel: 01268 561286 (Essex) or mobile: 07780 688750.

ELECTROMOTION ULTRAGLIDE 4- wheel electric scooter. With charger, 30 miles on full charge, max speed 8 mph. With front and rear baskets, indicators, front and rear lights. Brand new, never been used, genuine reason for sale. Cost £4,000, offers will be considered around £3,000. Tel: 0151 724 2376.

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